

Please fix the charter school approval process - support SB 1096!

Chairs Currey and McCrory, Ranking members Berthel and McCarty, and distinguished members of the Committee. I am grateful for the opportunity to speak on charter school authorization and for your leadership in raising this bill before the committee once again.

By large, I support S.B. 1096. This legislation approaches a solution to reversing the negative impacts caused by legislation implemented in the 2015 session. Under this raised bill, the State Department of Education will have the ability to grant a charter to a new public charter school. Current law has created an obstructive system that makes it extremely difficult for an approved school to receive authorization. The current process we are speaking on today involves coordination with 3 different entities and multiple steps stalling the process. The total timeline for a charter school to be approved from the RFP announcement to a school formally opening was historically 2 years prior to the current change. We are now on year 5 for 2 schools stuck in this process. Additionally, this legislation creates a nonlapsing account in the General Fund that will sanction SDE to fund charters approved by the State Board of Education known as the charter school approval grant account. These funds will be expended upon the granting of a charter in a fair and appropriate timeline through legislative budgetary power, maintaining legislative oversight and upholding the democratic process many fear would be lost. This bill also would ensure any unexpended funds appropriated will not lapse but be deposited into the charter school approval grant account.

Thank you for ensuring amazing public school opportunities exist for our students.

Ronelle

rpswagerty@nbfacademy.org